INAUGURATION OF THE RAY R IRANI OXY ENGINEERING COMPLEX
September 9, 2014
Remarks by Dean Makram Suidan

Chairman Philip Khoury, AUB Trustees, President Peter Dorman, Provost Ahmad Dallal, Distinguished Guests and FEA Colleagues:

In the midst of the chaotic state of affairs around us I want to give you a very positive report on the going ones in FEA.

Our Students: Academically, FEA has the strongest students on Campus. This Fall semester, FEA admitted only a select 15% of those students that applied to join the Faculty. We now have an enrollment of 2,231 undergraduate students, 259 masters students and 68 PhDs. 36% of our students are women and approximately one of every three students at AUB is in FEA.

Our Faculty: We have 94 full-time faculty members, 19% of whom are women. We are working hard to further improve gender diversity in both our faculty and students. Our faculty members are second to none. Despite the very limited resources available to them to perform research, last year, our faculty averaged 3.6 refereed journal publications per faculty member per year. This productivity is higher than that at most Engineering Colleges in the U.S.

Our Quality: According to the most recent QS Ranking, that assesses research and quality of education, all FEA programs ranked in the top 250 worldwide and Civil Engineering ranked in the top 200.

New Programs: We have recently launched a number of new undergraduate programs. Although the new Chemical Engineering program has just graduated its first batch of Engineers, students in that program have the highest admission cut-off scores on Campus. Our new Industrial Engineering Program was approved only three months ago. First year student enrollment in this Program stands at 39. This response means that we are listening to our clients, and that we are delivering an excellent product. We are in the final stages of preparation for a Petroleum Engineering undergraduate program and our MS and PhD programs in Biomedical Engineering are under final review in New York State.
We will not stop here. New programs that address the needs of the 21st century are in various stages of development. One such program will focus on Energy and Materials where alternative and renewable energy systems will be emphasized. We at FEA are also actively fund-raising for a Center for Sustainable Infrastructure Research. This Center will bring to FEA the concept of sustainability and will focus on the special infrastructure needs of Lebanon and the region.

**Our Infrastructure:** When I first arrived at AUB in August of 2011, there was a big pond behind the Bechtel Building that used to fill up during high tide and empty the rest of the day. This FEA Pond was there for several years. Now after three years, and thanks to the generosity Dr. Ray Irani, this pond has been transformed into this Irani-Oxy-Engineering-Complex otherwise known as (IOEC). This state-of-the-art Facility will house the Engineering Undergraduate and Graduate research labs, five classrooms and one e-classroom. On this very floor where we are standing, which commands the most magnificent views of any floor at AUB, we have our PhD student offices. This tells you how important research is to FEA and AUB. I would like to again thank Dr. Irani for this magnificent gift. I would also like to take this opportunity and thank the donors that have named some of the spaces in this IOEC building. Those are:

- The Frem Family for the George Frem Manufacturing Technologies Hub
- Khatib and Alami for the Cafeteria and Dining Room
- Trustee Riad Kamal for the Structural Engineering Laboratory
- Hassan and Christiane Hachem Classroom
- AREEN Group for the Omar Salhab Classroom
- Fadlo and Justine Touma for the Geotecnical Engineering Laboratory
- Sami W. Sidawi for the Water Resources Center
- The FEA Class of 1964 VLSI Circuits Laboratory Honoring Dean Ibrahim Hajj
- Holcim for the Transportation and Construction Laborator
- and last but not least, I would like to thank the students of the late Neddi Jouzy for naming the Transportation Laboratory after a magnificent man.

This building along with the other five Engineering Buildings will allow us to accommodate our growing numbers of students and faculty members. At present, we have 14 faculty members that are sharing offices, two to an office. FEA, with the help of the Physical Plant, has started the task of remodeling the Bechtel Engineering Building. In three months during the summer, and while the building was occupied and functioning, we were able to remodel the fifth floor of Bechtel into state-of-the-art offices and conference rooms. I invite you, if you have the time to visit that remodeled floor. Plans are underway within the next two years to remodel the whole building in order to accommodate the Engineering Faculty members and provide 12 classrooms ranging in capacity from 50 to 70 students each.
In closing, although I do not like to brag about FEA, I feel compelled to agree with President Dorman when he said FEA is the best faculty at AUB. And I add that it is not only the best faculty at AUB but also the premier Engineering and Architecture faculty in the region. My predecessors handed me a very good faculty and I hope that I will hand my successor an excellent one. Thank you.